privatise the plant as reported in Oriya Samaj dated 26th March, 1999;

(b) whether Government are aware of the situation prevailing in Steel Industries as reported in the paper; and

(c) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) to (c) It is not a fact that welfare measures of the steel plants of Steel Authoirty of India Ltd. (SAIL) are being curtailed, nor is there any plan for privatisation of these plants at present. Government are aware of the current market situation in the steel sector and have initiated a number of measures such as rationalisation of DEPB rates, fixing of floor prices for certain flat products, reduction in cost of several inputs by waiving special customs duty, imposition of anti-dumping duty on certain HR flat products from Russia and Ukraine etc.

Proposal to increase steel production

3059. SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to increase the production of steel;

(b) if so, the number of new areas in which production of steel is proposed to be undertaken during Ninth Five Year Plan; and

(c) what are the details of assessment made for increasing the production of steel in Ninth Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) and (b) With the onset of the New Industrial Policy, iron and steel industry has been dereserved from the list of industries reserved for the public sector. There is no requirement of industrial licensing for setting up of iron and steel plants in the country except for certain locational restrictions. As such, production of steel in the country is determined by the market forces of demand and availability. Since the steel industry has been opened up completely, setting up of new steel plants, increasing capacity .etc. are a matter of commercial judgement on the part of the enterpreneurs.

(c) As per the projections made by Working Group on Iron and Steel for the IXth Five Year Plan set up by the Planning Commission, the production of finished (carbon) steel will reach 38.012 million tonnes by 2001-02 against the projected demand of 38.68 million tonnes.

Bailing out of Vizag Steel Plant

3060. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken to bail out Vizag Steel Plant through revival plans; and

(b) the decision taken to expand its production capacity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) and (b) A comprehensive tumaround proposal based on the recommendations of an internationally/reputed consultant has been prepared and is presently under inter-ministerial consideration. This includes a proposal to increase the production capacity of the plant.

मध्य प्रदेश में हीरे एवं सोने के नए भण्डार

3061. **श्री दिलीप सिंह जूदेव:** क्या इस्पात और खान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:—

(क) मध्य प्रदेश में किन-किन क्षेत्रों में हीरे एवं सोने के नए भण्डार होने की जानकारी प्राप्त हुई है;

(ख) इन दोनों बहुमूल्य धातुओं का दोहन करने के लिए 28 मार्च, 1999 तक क्या-क्या कार्यवाही की गई है; और

(ग) इनके दोहन हेतु निजी क्षेत्रों एवं विदेशी सहायता प्राप्त करने हेतु की गयी कार्यवाही का ब्यौरा क्या है?

इस्पात और खान मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री रमेश बैस): (क) भारतीय भू-वैज्ञानिक सर्वेक्षण ने हाल ही में मध्य प्रदेश राज्य में हीरे और सोने के लिए पूर्वेक्षण कार्य किया है। रायपुर जिले के प्यालीखण्ड-बेहराडीह क्षेत्र में हीरे और बस्तर जिले के टोकापाल, डुंगनपाल, मजेरीपदार और पाराकोट में चार किम्बरलाइट पिण्डों का पता चला है। गुडहारपहाड़ ब्लाक, सिधी जिला, इमालिया ब्लाक, जबलपुर जिला और पंदरीपानी ब्लाक, रायगढ़ जिले में किए गए गवेषण में स्वर्ण संसाधनों की संभावना का भी पता चला है।

(ख) और (ग) मध्य प्रदेश सरकार ने मध्य प्रदेश खनन निगम लि० को मध्य प्रदेश के 11 जिलों में स्वर्ण और हीरा संसाधनों का गवेषण और विदोहन करने के लिए राज्य सरकार का एजेंट नियुक्त किया है। मध्य प्रदेश में हीरे के लिए खनन पट्टे की मंजूरी हेतु राज्य सरकार से कोई प्रस्ताव प्राप्त नहीं हुआ है। तथापि, रायपुर जिले के बेराडीह ब्लाक में4600 वर्ग कि० मी० क्षेत्र में हीरा निक्षेपों के सर्वेक्षण, गवेषण और मूल्यांकन के लिए मैसर्स बी० विजयकुमार छत्तीसगढ़ प्राईवेट लि० रायपुर (मध्य प्रदेश) के पक्ष में पूर्वेक्षण लाइसेंस की मंजूरी के लिए मध्य प्रदेश सरकार से एक प्रस्ताव प्राप्त हुआ है। चूंकि प्रस्ताव खान और खनिज (विनियमन और विकास) अधिनियम, 1957 के प्रावधानों और उसके अंतर्गत बनाए गए नियमों के अनुरुप नहीं था, इसलिए राज्य सरकार को कुछ मुद्दों के संबंध में सूचना / स्पष्टीकरण देने का अनुरोध किया गया है। राज्य सरकार से सूचना / स्पष्टीकरण प्राप्त होने पर पूर्वेक्षण लाइसेंस की मंजूरी संबंधी प्रस्ताव पर आगामी कार्यवाही की जाएगी। हाल ही में मध्य प्रदेश सरकार को एक अनुस्मारक भेजा गया है और उनसे अनुरोध किया गया है कि वे सूचना तत्काल भेज दें ताकि केन्द्र सरकार गुणावगुण आधार पर और कानून के प्रावधानों के अनुसार मामले पर आगे कार्रवाई कर सके।

Acquisition of land adjacent of VSP

3062. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Andhra Pradesh has acquired a vast tract off Vizag Steel Plant Land;

(b) whether consent to VSP authorities was taken before acquiring the land? and

(c) the action proposed to get in exchange land adjacent to the plant to ensure subsequent expansion plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) to (c) No, sir. However, there is a proposal for reconveyance of 1100 acres of land from Vizag Steel Plant to the State Government of Andhra Pradesh for the purpose of development of a minor port at Gangavaram. This is subject to certain conditions including inter-alia transfer of 1100 acres of land in exchange to the Steel Plant.

Bailing out of private steel plant

3063. SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether IDBI has recently bailed out certain private steel companies; if so, the details thereof?

(b) what is the total capacity utilisation of such private plants and the capacity achieved by them during the last two years; and

(c) what is the status of restructuring plan of IISCO and the financial assistance including plan allocation to IISCO during last one year and the extent of assistance so utilised?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI RAMESH BAIS): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and would be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) IISCO is a sick company and has been under reference to BIFR since June, 1994 for determination of measures in regard to the future of the company. SAIL have submitted a proposal, which inter-alia includes writing off accumulated losses, to revive IISCO in a Joint Venture (JV) partnership with M/s. Tyazhpromexport (TPE) of Russia. This proposal is dependent on the use of Rupee Debt Funds for which an Inter Governmental Agreement between the